226

For material on fishing methods see pp. 232-233, category 116.

5: Bancroft H-4 (no date) 1883 Plateau

22b The salmon fisheries of the Columbia are now famous throughout the world. Once every year innumerable multitudes of these noble fish enter the river from the ocean to deposit their spawn. Impelled by instinct, they struggle to reach the extreme limits of the stream, working their way in blind desperation to the very sources of every little branch, overcoming seeming impossibilities, and only to fulfill their destiny and die; for if they escape human enemies, they either kill themselves in their mad efforts to leap impassable falls, or if their efforts are crowned with success, they are supposed never to return to the ocean. This fishery has always been the chief and an inexhaustible source of food for the Chinooks, who, although skillful fishermen, have not been obliged to invent a great variety of methods or implements for the capture of the salmon, which rarely if ever have failed them. Certain ceremonies must, however, be observed with the first fish taken; his meat must be cut only with the grain, and the hearts of all caught must be burned or eaten, and on no account be thrown into the water or be devoured by a dog. With these precautions there is no reason to suppose that the Chinook would ever lack a supply of fish. The salmon begin to run in April, but remain several weeks in the

ing the purpose of a door-way. 'The fire-place is sunk into the earth, and confined from spreading above by a wooden frame.' *Vancouver's Voy.*, vol. ii., p. 77. Emmons, in *Schoolcraft's Archives*, vol. iii., p. 206, speaks of a palisade enclosure ten or fifteen feet high, with a covered way to the river. 'The Indian huts on the banks of the Columbia are, for the most part, constructed of the bark of trees, pine branches, and brambles, which are sometimes covered with skins or rags.' *Domenech's Deserts*, vol. ii., p. 260. But 'the Chinooks build their houses of thick and broad planks,' etc. *Id.* Lewis and Clarke saw a house in the Willamette Valley two hundred and twenty-six feet long, divided into two ranges of large apartments separated by a narrow alley four feet wide. *Travels*, pp. 502–4, 509, 431–2, 415–16, 409, 392. The door is a piece of board 'which hangs loose by a string, like a sort of pendulum,' and is self-closing. *Swan's N. W. Coast*, pp. 110–11. 'The tribes near the coast remove less frequently than those of the interior.' *California, Past, Present and Future*, p. 133. 'I never saw more than four fires, or above eighty persons—slaves and all—in the largest house.' *Ross' Adven.*, pp. 98–9; *Palmer's Jour.*, pp. 88, 108; *Irving's Astoria*, p. 322; *Nicolay's Oga.*, 144, 148–9; *Cox's Adven.*, vol. i., p. 327, from *Lewis and Clarke*; *Dunn's Oregon*, pp. 135–7, from *Lewis and Clarke*; *Parker's Explor. Tour.*, pp. 144–5, 178–9, 245; *Franchère's Nar.*, pp. 247–8; *Lord's Nat.*, vol. i., p. 65; *Townsend's Nar.*, p. 181; *Kane's Wand.*, pp. 187–8; *Hale's Ethnog. in U. S. Ex. Ex.*, vol. vi., pp. 204, 216–17; *Strickland's Hist. Missions*, pp. 135–9.

5: Bancroft H-4 (no date) 1883 Plateau

warmer waters near the mouth, and are there taken while in their best condition, by the Chinook tribe proper, with a straight net of bark or roots, sometimes five hundred feet long and fifteen feet deep, with floats and sinkers. One end of the net is carried out into the river at high water, and drawn in by the natives on the shore, who with a mallet quiet the fish and prevent them from jumping over the net and escaping. Farther up, especially at the Cascades and at the falls of the Willamette, salmon are speared by natives standing on the rocks or on planks placed for the purpose; scooped up in small dip-nets; or taken with a large unbaited hook attached by a socket and short line to a long pole. There is some account of artificial channels of rocks at these places, but such expedients were generally not needed, since, beside those caught by the Chinooks, such numbers were cast on the rocks by their own efforts to leap the falls, that the air for months was infected by the decaying mass; and many of these in a palatable state of decay were gathered by the natives for food. Hooks, spears, and nets were sometimes rubbed with the juice of certain plants supposed to be attractive to the fish. Once taken, the salmon were cleaned by the women, dried in the sun and smoked in the lodges; then they were sometimes powdered fine between two stones, before packing in skins or mats for winter use. The heads were always eaten as favorite portions during the fishing season. Next to the salmon the sturgeon was ranked as a source of food. This fish, weighing from two hundred to five hundred pounds, was taken by a baited hook, sunk about twenty feet, and allowed to float down the current; when hooked, the sturgeon rises suddenly and is dispatched by a spear, lifted into the canoe by a gaff-hook, or towed ashore. The Chinooks do not attack the whale, but when one is accidentally cast upon the shore, more or less decayed, a season of feasting ensues and the native heart is glad. Many smaller varieties of fish are taken by net, spear, hook, or rake, but no methods are employed meriting special description. Wild fowl are

5: Bancroft H-4 (no date) 1883 Plateau

The inland families eat fish and game, with roots and fruit; no nation subsists without all these supplies; but the proportion of each consumed varies greatly according to locality. Some tribes divide their forces regularly into bands, of men to fish and hunt, of women to cure fish and flesh, and to gather roots and berries. I have spoken of the coast tribes as a fish-eating, and the interior tribes as a hunting people, attributing in great degree their differences of person and character to their food, or rather to their methods of obtaining it; yet fish constitutes an important element of inland subsistence as well. Few tribes live altogether without salmon, the great staple of the Northwest; since those dwelling on streams inaccessible to the salmon by reason of intervening falls, obtain their supply by annual migrations to the fishing-grounds, or by trade with other nations. The principal salmon fisheries of the Columbia are at the Dalles, the falls ten miles above, and at Kettle Falls. Other productive stations are on the Powder, Snake, Yakima, Okanagan, and Clarke rivers. On the Fraser, which has no falls in its lower course, fishing is carried on all along the banks of the river instead of at regular stations, as on the Columbia. Nets, weirs, hooks, spears, and all the implements and methods by which fish are taken and cured have been sufficiently described in treating of the coast region;[1] in the interior I find no important variations except in the basket method in use at the Chaudières or Kettle Falls by the Quiarlpi tribe. Here an immense willow basket, often ten feet in diameter and twelve feet deep, is suspended at the falls from

huts covered with mats.' *Gibbs*, in *Pac. R. R. Repts.*, vol. i., p. 407. Shushwaps erect rude slants of bark or matting; have no tents or houses. *Milton and Cheadle's N. W. Pass.*, p. 242. From the swamps south of Flatbow Lake, 'the Kootanie Indians obtain the klusquis or thick reed, which is the only article that serves them in the construction of their lodges,' and is traded with other tribes. *Sullivan*, in *Palliser's Explor.*, p. 15. In winter the Salish cover their mats with earth. *Hale's Ethnog.*, in *U. S. Ex. Ex.*, vol. vi., p. 207. Flag huts of the Walla Wallas. *Farnham's Trav.*, p. 85; *Mullan's Rept*, pp. 49–50; *Palmer's Jour.*, p. 61; *Coke's Rocky Mts.*, p. 295; *Irving's Astoria*, pp. 315, 319; *Id., Bonneville's Adven.*, p. 301; *De Smet, Voy.*, p. 185; *Id., West. Missions*, p. 284; *Lord's Nat.*, vol. ii., pp. 105–6. *Hunt*, in *Nouvelles Annales des Voy.*, tom. x., 1821, pp. 74–5, 79.

[1] [See pp. 232-233, category 116-- Analyst]

5: Bancroft H-4 (no date) 1883 Plateau

226 strong timbers fixed in crevices of the rocks, and above this is a frame so attached that the salmon in attempting to leap the fall strike the sticks of the frame and are thrown back into the basket, in the largest of which naked men armed with clubs await them. Five thousand pounds of salmon have thus been taken in a day [624] by means of a single basket. During the fishing-season the Salmon Chief has full authority; his basket is the largest, and must be located a month before others are allowed to fish. The small nets used in the same region have also the peculiarity of a stick which keeps the mouth open when the net is empty, but is removed by the weight of the fish. Besides the salmon, sturgeon are extensively taken in the Fraser, and in the Arrow Lakes, while trout and other varieties of small fish abound in 221 most of the streams. The fishing-season is the summer, 226 between June and September, varying a month or more 527 according to locality. This is also the season of trade and festivity, when tribes from all directions assemble 796 to exchange commodities, gamble, dance, and in later times to drink and fight.[163]

226 [163] Natives begin to assemble at Kettle Falls about three weeks before the salmon begin to run; feuds are laid by; horse-racing, gambling, love-making, etc., occupy the assembly; and the medicine-men are busy working charms for a successful season. The fish are cut open, dried on poles over a small fire, and packed in bales. On the Fraser each family or village fishes for itself; near the mouth large gaff-hooks are used, higher up a net managed between two canoes. All the principal Indian fishing-stations on the Fraser are below Fort Hope. For sturgeon a spear seventy to eighty feet long is used. Cut of sturgeon-fishing. *Lord's Nat.*, vol. i., pp. 71–6, 181, 184–6. The Pend d'Oreilles 'annually construct a fence which reaches across the stream, and guides the fish into a weir or rack,' on Clarke River, just above the Lake. The Walla Walla 'fisheries at the Dalles and the falls, ten miles above, are the finest on the river.' The Yakima weirs constructed 'upon horizontal spars, and supported by tripods of strong poles erected at short distances apart; two of the logs fronting up stream, and one supporting them below;' some fifty or sixty yards long. The salmon of the Okanagan were 'of a small species, which had assumed a uniform red color.' 'The fishery at the Kettle Falls is one of the most important on the river, and the arrangements of the Indians in the shape of drying-scaffolds and store-houses are on a corresponding scale.' *Ind. Aff. Rep.*, 1854, pp. 214, 223, 231, 238; *Gibbs*, in *Pac. R. R. Rept.*, vol. i., pp. 407–8. The salmon chief at Kettle Falls distributes the fish among the people, every one, even the smallest child, getting an equal share. *Kane's Wand.*, pp. 311–14. On Des Chutes River 'they spear the fish with barbed iron points, fitted loosely by sockets to the ends of poles about eight feet long,' to which they are fastened by a thong about twelve feet long. *Abbott*, in *Pac. R. R. Rept.*, vol. vi., p. 90. On the upper Columbia an Indian 'cut off a bit of his leathern shirt, about the size of a small bean;

5: Bancroft H-4 · (no date) 1883 Plateau

The larger varieties of game are hunted by the natives on horseback wherever the nature of the country will permit. Buffalo are now never found west of the Rocky Mountains, and there are but few localities where large game has ever been abundant, at least since the country became known to white men. Consequently the Flatheads, Nez Percés, and Kootenais, the distinctively hunting nations, as well as bands from nearly every other tribe, cross the mountains once or twice each year, penetrating to the buffalo-plains between the Yellowstone and the Missouri, in the territory of hostile nations. The bow and arrow was the weapon with which buffalo and all other game were shot. No peculiar cunning seems to have been necessary to the native hunter of buffalo; he had only to ride into the immense herds on his well-trained horse, and select the fattest animals for his arrows. Various devices are mentioned as being practiced in the chase of deer, elk, and mountain sheep; such as driving them by a circle of fire on the prairie towards the concealed hunters, or approaching within arrow-shot

then pulling out two or three hairs from his horse's tail for a line, tied the bit of leather to one end of it, in place of a hook or fly.' *Ross' Adven.*, pp. 132–3. At the mouth of Flatbow River 'a dike of round stones, which runs up obliquely against the main stream, on the west side, for more than one hundred yards in length, resembling the foundation of a wall.' Similar range on the east side, supposed to be for taking fish at low water. *Ross' Fur Hunters*, vol. ii., pp. 165–6. West of the Rocky Mountains they fish 'with great success by means of a kind of large basket suspended from a long cord.' *Domenech's Deserts*, vol. ii., pp. 240–1. On Powder River they use the hook as a gaff. *Coke's Rocky Mts.*, p. 283. A Wasco spears three or four salmon of twenty to thirty pounds each in ten minutes. *Remy and Brenchley's Jour.*, vol. ii., p. 506. No salmon are taken above the upper falls of the Columbia. *Thornton's Ogn. and Cal.*, vol. i., p. 392. Walla Walla fish-weirs 'formed of two curtains of small willow switches matted together with withes of the same plant, and extending across the river in two parallel lines, six feet asunder. These are supported by several parcels of poles,....and are either rolled up or let down at pleasure for a few feet....A seine of fifteen or eighteen feet in length is then dragged down the river by two persons, and the bottom drawn up against the curtain of willows.' *Lewis and Clarke's Trav.*, p. 532. Make fishing-nets of flax. *Parker's Explor. Tour.*, p. 90. 'The Inland, as well as the Coast, tribes, live to a great extent upon salmon.' *Mayne's B. C.*, p. 242; *Nicolay's Ogn. Ter.*, pp. 152–3. Palouse 'live solely by fishing.' *Mullan's Rept.*, p. 49. Salmon cannot ascend to Coeur d'Alène Lake. *Hale's Ethnog.*, in *U. S. Ex. Ex.*, vol. vi., pp. 209–10. Okanagan food 'consists principally of salmon and a small fish which they call carp.' *Wilkes' Nar.*, in *U. S. Ex. Ex.*, vol. iv., p. 462. The Walla Wallas 'may well be termed the fishermen of the Skyuse camp.' *Farnham's Trav.*, p. 82.